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South Florida's Immigrant Youth and Civic Engagement: Major Engagement: Minor Differences

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Although most immigrants are adults, their foreign and U.S.-born children are the fastest-growing component of the U.S. population. How these children integrate into U.S. society and the ways that they civically engage will greatly determine the nature of civil society in the United States over the next few decades. Using qualitative and quantitative data, this study compares the patterns of civic engagement of immigrant and nonimmigrant youth in Miami, Florida, a region of the United States with the highest proportion of immigrants. By almost all measures, immigrant civic engagement is statistically similar to that of nonimmigrants. Because immigrants engage more in civic actions that benefit their ethnic group, they are often missed by traditional civic engagement measures. Those of immigrant extraction, for example, devote considerable activity to using their bilingual skills and helping other immigrants. Like native minorities, immigrants also become heavily engaged in politically related activities in response to discrimination.

By the end of the 1990s, approximately 3 million foreign-born children and 11 million U.S.-born children of foreign-born parents lived in the United States (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Although most immigrants are adults, their foreign and U.S.-born children are the fastest-growing component of the U.S. population. How these children integrate into U.S. society and the ways that they civically engage will greatly determine the nature of civil society in the United States over the next few decades. Yet, few researchers have focused on immigrant youth and even fewer have examined issues of civic engagement for immigrant youth. A recent literature review (Stepick & Dutton Stepick, 2002) indicates that nearly all the work on immigrant youth

focuses on academic achievement, and few projects even indirectly address immigrant youth's civic engagement.¹ How are the youth of immigrant background civically engaged, and how does their engagement differ from youth not of an immigrant background? Drawing on two studies using qualitative data from high school youth and quantitative data from college freshman in Miami, Florida, this paper addresses these questions.

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¹An October 2007 search of Sociological Abstracts, PsycInfo, ERIC, and Worldwide Political Science Abstracts for articles that had immigrant youth and civic engagement in their abstracts produced only three, one by these authors (Stepick & Dutton Stepick, 2002), a dissertation (Camras, 2003), and an overview of a March 2005 CIRCLE conference (Levine & Youniss, 2006). A search on scholar.google.net of the terms *youth civic engagement* and *immigrant* produces 75 results, but these include many websites that refer to the importance of immigrant youth rather than research on immigrant youth. The citations that are based on research generally refer to youth with only passing mention of immigrant youth. Only five of them contain original research (Jensen & Larson, 2005; Ramakrishnan, 2002; Soysal, 1997; Torney-Purta, 2002a,b).

The limited previous research indicates that prejudice and discrimination against immigrant youths increases their civic engagement. Latinos in California, for example, experienced an emergence of ethnic consciousness in response to Proposition 187, which sought to deny benefits to undocumented immigrants (Ramakrishnan & Espenshade, 2001; Suárez-Orozco, 1996). Similarly, the immigrant youth whom Bedolla (2000) studied in California were alienated from mainstream electoral politics because they perceived politics to be about “them” (Americans) trying to hurt “us” (Latinos).

Alienation from mainstream America and the development of an ethnic consciousness has led to the concept of segmented assimilation, which asserts that in response to prejudice and discrimination some contemporary immigrant youth are assimilating not to mainstream America but to particular ethnic or racial segments. For example, Black immigrant youth, especially those who live in the inner city and are poor, are likely to “become” African Americans (Waters, 1999).² Will immigrant youth then adopt the unique civic engagement styles of U.S. minorities, or will they adopt uniquely immigrant civic engagement behaviors? Will they engage in civic activities different from those of the nonimmigrant population?

THE PRESENT STUDY

Our profile of immigrant youth specifically addresses whether patterns of civic engagement differ between immigrants and nonimmigrants. Our study population lives in South Florida, which proportionately has the largest concentration of immigrants of any urban area in the United States. We use quantitative data to determine overall trends, whereas the qualitative data provide richer, contextualized examples that illuminate the trends.

Miami is a strategic research site (Merton, 1987) in that it vividly reveals the effects of immigration that are beginning to emerge elsewhere in the United States. Miami-Dade County is the largest county in the U.S. with a majority Latino population. Immediately to the north of Miami-Dade, Broward County has the largest

number of Jamaican-born residents of any place in the United States. Miami-Dade and Broward combined also have the largest number of Haitian-born residents. In addition to being numerous, immigrants in Miami-Dade County, especially Cubans, exert a significant political influence. Immigrants control the Miami City and Miami-Dade County commissions and the school board. The county and the city each have a Cuban-born mayor. The local congressional delegation has three Cuban-born representatives, and the state legislature delegation is dominated by immigrants, primarily Cubans, but there is also a Colombian and a Haitian.³

In this context, following Flanagan’s (2004) broad perspective on civic engagement, we address not only immigrant youth’s relationships to the state but also their more general relationship to the broader society, their becoming members of a polity. By civic engagement, we mean youth actively involved in activities that reach beyond their immediate friends and family. At the same time, we still measure involvement with family to test the level of obligation that might deter civic engagement in the broader society.

Slightly altering the work of Keeter, Zukin, Andolina, and Jenkins (2002), we group activities into four types: political, civic, expressive, and social.⁴ Political activities include registering to vote,⁵ discussing politics, attending a demonstration, and seeking information on current events through newspapers or the Internet. Civic activities are those designed to help other people individually or through formal service organizations and programs. These include leadership positions such as being a club officer and simpler participation such as volunteer or community service. We also included a number of activities specifically related to immigrants, such as helping a non-English speaker. Expressive group membership incorporates participation in athletics and ethnic organizations. Social activities include both helping one’s family and being with one’s peers, plus attending church. Although we

³The sociological literature on Miami is quite extensive. See, for example, Stepick, Grenier, Castro, and Dunn (2003).

⁴Keeter et al. (2002) divide engagement into just two kinds: the political and the civic. For the political they focus on activities that relate to electoral politics. Given the youth of our population, we did not ask their participation in donating money to a campaign or political party, volunteering specifically for a candidate or political organization, displaying campaign buttons, signs, or stickers, or trying to persuade others politically during an election, although probably some in our sample did do these things. We also broaden the definition of political engagement to include activities pertaining to seeking information on current affairs. Keeter et al.’s civic is roughly equivalent to our service activities. They do not have a category similar to our social engagement.

⁵Few actually had an opportunity to vote, as the median age of the sample was 18 and the survey was administered in an off-election year, 2001.

²The concept of segmented assimilation is fundamentally different from Berry’s (1997) concept of separation in which he argues that immigrants associate primarily with conational immigrants; for example, Mexican immigrants socialize primarily with other Mexican immigrants and avoid interaction with the receiving society. Segmented assimilation argues that immigrant youth (and the concept has been applied solely to immigrant youth, not adults) in contexts such as schools necessarily interact with U.S. minorities, not just other immigrants. In the process the immigrant youth come to acculturate to the particular norms and behaviors of the U.S. native minority youth group.

do not define these as civic engagement, this last category extends the work of Keeter et al. (2002) to incorporate types of behaviors relevant to Putnam's interest in the social aspects of community.

METHODS

Participants

In the fall of 2001, we administered an extensive survey to the freshman English classes at Florida International University (FIU), the state university of Florida in Miami. FIU is one of the 10 state universities in the Florida State University System. We use this data to establish the overall trends in civic engagement.

With a total student population of nearly 37,000, FIU enrolls students from outside of Florida (5% from most of the 50 U.S. states) and outside the United States (another 8.6% from more than 130 countries), but the student body is primarily from South Florida. Consequently, it reflects the diversity of Miami-Dade County with nearly 70% of student enrollment from minority groups, including a Latino student majority of 55.7% and another 12.9% Black.⁶ In this respect, it is quite different from the student bodies of many U.S. colleges and universities, which overall have far lower percentages of minority students.

Our sample survey consisted of 1,334 freshmen. The survey was administered in the required freshman English class. Although not all students attended class on the day the survey was administered in their particular class, all students who attended class successfully completed the survey. We had no refusals. As reflected in Table 1, the typical respondent is U.S.-born. However, given that Miami-Dade County has the highest foreign-born population of any U.S. county, it is not surprising that a plurality of the FIU sample have at least one immigrant parent. By combining first-generation immigrants (i.e., those who were born abroad), the 1.5 generation (those who were born abroad but who came to the United States when they were less than 12 years old), and the second generation, the FIU sample closely matches the overall Miami-Dade County population as being largely of immigrant origins (77% vs. 76.1%).

The majority of FIU's students are first-generation college students. Only 22% of their fathers and 23% of their mothers have a college degree. This is roughly comparable to both the surrounding county and the United States overall. The sample did have a higher

TABLE 1
Survey Sample and Comparative Populations' Demographics

	<i>FIU Freshmen Survey Respondents (%)</i>	<i>Residents of Miami-Dade County (%)</i>	<i>Residents of the United States (%)</i>
Born in the U.S.	65	49.1 ^a	88.9 ^a
Foreign-born	35	50.9 ^a	11.1 ^a
Naturalized citizen	77.6	46.6 ^a	40.3 ^a
Noncitizen ^d	22.4	53.4 ^a	59.7 ^a
Immigrant generation ^c			
Not immigrant or child of immigrant	23.0	23.9	79.7
1st generation	17.9	39.7	7.4
1.5 generation	17.3	9.4	1.6
2nd generation	41.8	27.0	11.3
Latino	49	59.8	12.5
Black	11	18.1	12.3
Asian	4	1.5	3.6
Other	36	20.6	71.6
Mothers with a bachelor's degree	23	20.2 ^b	22.8 ^b
Fathers with a bachelor's degree	22	24.7 ^b	26.1 ^b
Median household income	\$50–80,000	35,966 ^b	41,994 ^b

^aSource: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 4.

^bSource: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 for people 25 and over.

^cA nonimmigrant was U.S.-born and both of his/her parents were U.S.-born; a second-generation immigrant is U.S.-born or came to the U.S. before the age of 6 and at least one of his/her parents is foreign-born. A first-generation immigrant is foreign-born and moved to the U.S. after the age of 12. A 1.5-generation immigrant is foreign-born but moved to the U.S. after the age of 6 and before the age of 12.

^dFor survey respondents, we classified those who have dual citizenship as noncitizens.

family household income than the county. Because the survey was conducted only among students at the local state university and as reflected in our sample's higher socioeconomic background, we cannot claim that it completely represents the broader population of Miami-Dade County.

Our qualitative data come from ongoing work that we have been conducting since the mid-1990s among immigrant and native minority adolescents in South Florida on various topics including civic engagement, education, ethnic identity, and interethnic interactions (see <http://www.fiu.edu/~iei>). These students were recruited when they first entered local high schools in the fall of 1996. We concentrated on a core sample of 330 students who were of African American, Haitian, West Indian, Cuban, Nicaraguan, or Mexican origin. Observing them both in the schools and in the broader community, we followed them for a minimum of 4 years and in some cases longer. The primary data are notes from participant observation, although they also come

⁶These numbers were provided by FIU's Office of Institutional Research. FIU's international students are counted as a separate category by FIU's Office of Institutional Research. Given that a significant number of these are from Latin America, the Latino student majority is actually higher.

TABLE 2
Civic Engagement and Immigrant Generation

		<i>First-Generation Immigrant (%)</i>	<i>1.5-Generation Immigrant (%)</i>	<i>Second-Generation Immigrant (%)</i>	<i>Neither Immigrant nor Child of Immigrant (%)</i>
Political	Discuss politics with family/friends	91.3	88.4	90.5	90.4
	Read a newspaper for current events	87.8	87.3	86.1	87.0
	Used Internet for current events/news**	87.6	90.4	93.3	86.2
	Registered to vote***	30.9	30.0	52.8	57.6
	Attended organized demonstrations	64.9	67.5	65.7	63.3
Civic	Volunteer or community service**	80.3	89.6	89.0	87.0
	Officer of club or student government	45.7	50.7	47.4	42.8
	Tutored someone	77.2	80.7	78.1	74.3
	Participated in community fund-raiser**	62.1	68.4	73.3	73.3
	Donated blood	30.5	34.8	38.8	38.6
	Helped senior citizens	74.0	72.4	75.5	75.4
	Helped non-English speaker write***	74.0	83.8	81.6	57.9
	Helped a recent immigrant***	44.4	51.8	46.7	34.3
	Helped someone who can't read**	51.8	48.5	52.1	40.2
	Athletic activities**	86.1	81.3	78.2	84.8
Expressive	Active in ethnic club**	56.2	49.8	56.3	47.4
	Ran errands for relatives	85.0	89.8	89.8	90.7
Social	Visited relatives	95.6	96.1	97.5	96.4
	Attended family reunions***	88.1	74.4	77.1	71.9
	Watched over younger siblings	66.1	64.8	62.4	59.9
	Hang out with other ethnic or racial groupmember**	88.7	96.5	94.9	94.3
	Have friends over to your home	96.5	98.2	98.5	97.6
	Attended church or other religious activity	83.3	84.7	84.9	81.8

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

from semistructured interviews with the youth, their parents, and school personnel, and from focus groups with the youth. Data derived from this ethnographic work exemplify the trends revealed in the quantitative data drawn from the college freshmen. We do expect the possibility of a small overlap in the ethnographic sample and the survey sample, as about one half of the high school sample planned to attend a local college. Because the survey was completed anonymously, we cannot confirm any overlap.

Measures

The 253-item survey administered to the FIU freshmen focused on civic engagement as well as demographic and other background characteristics.⁷ Consistent with Toppe's suggestion that inquiring about specific behaviors is more accurate than asking generally about volunteering (2005), we asked about participation on 26 items concerning civic engagement activities, first in high school and then since attending college. For each item, respondents indicated whether they participated in these activities very often, often, sometimes, rarely,

once, or never. Table 2 indicates what percentage of the sample participated in each type of activity during high school very often or often. Because the freshmen had been in college for only a few months when we administered the survey, we do not include here their college activities. The table presents simple marginal summaries and does not control for any variables. Significance was measured by chi-square.

QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Political Engagement

In terms of being informed and discussing politics, the surveyed youth appear to be highly engaged. About 90% discuss politics often or very often, comparable to a national sample of college students (Niemi & Hammer, 2004). Similarly, over 85% read newspapers and browse the Internet for current events. There were no statistically significant differences among immigrant generations or between immigrants and nonimmigrants for any of these political or current event discussion or information questions. All groups exhibited similarly high levels of involvement.

Yet, they do not appear to be especially engaged in electoral political activity. In that arena, the FIU sample

⁷The questionnaire also examined religious beliefs and participation not included here.

engages below comparative national norms. In a national sample of college youth in 2004, 88% claimed they were registered to vote (Niemi & Hammer, 2004). As Table 2 indicates, the 2001 voter registration rate of the FIU sample was notably lower, with less than 60% claiming registration.⁸ That level is still 13% above the 47% nationally of youth 18–24 who claimed in the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey to have actually voted in the 2004 presidential election (Lopez, Kirby, & Sagoff, 2005).⁹

Not surprisingly, immigrant generation does affect voter registration. Those of nonimmigrant origins are nearly twice as likely to be registered to vote as either first-generation or 1.5-generation immigrants. As expected, those who are not U.S. citizens were much less likely to be registered to vote. A surprisingly high percentage, 84.9% of those who were born abroad, both first- or 1.5-generation immigrants, were also U.S. citizens. We do not have data on their motivations for becoming citizens, but minimally it indicates that they (or their parents) actively pursued the attainment of civil and political rights.

In our qualitative work, South Florida youth often evinced alienation from electoral politics. Nadege, a first-generation Haitian, reflects a cynical political assessment: "I mean, I think y'all's vote don't change anything. The decision is already made. It's just like a game." Erica, an African American, also expressed little faith in the power of the vote:

I ain't fixin' to vote for somebody and then when they get in office they be messing up. I'll be mad. I'd be saying, "Dang, if I wouldn't have voted they wouldn't have won." Well, probably they would've won anyways. But still, they be lying and I don't know why should I vote for them. So, I be like, forget about it. So, I just don't vote.

On the other hand, over 60% of the college freshmen had participated in a political demonstration of some kind. This relatively high percentage was affected by the timing of the survey and confirms Junn's (2006) emphasis on the context of survey results. During what was for most of the respondents their senior year of high school, Miami was the epicenter of a dramatic 2000–2001 political struggle over the custody of Elián González, the 6-year-old Cuban boy who survived a raft

trip to Miami while his mother drowned and his father remained in Cuba. The Miami Cuban community insisted that Elián remain in Miami rather than return to Cuba. Fidel Castro along with Elián's father equally adamantly insisted that the boy should be reunited with his father in Cuba. For months demonstrations enveloped Miami and seized national attention (Stepick et al., 2003).

Before the arrival of Elián, most of the Latino youth whom we had been studying ethnographically had been politically disengaged. The Cuban youth tended to respectfully dismiss their parents' and grandparents' obsession with Castro and Cuba as irrelevant to their lives. The controversy surrounding Elián, however, captured their attention and transformed many of their opinions. Ronald, a second-generation Cuban, noted,

Like with Elián, that's when you hear about everything. That's when things start like surfacing. . . . But, like that was completely and totally out of proportion because all it would show in the news was people, you know, setting trash cans on fire, getting in fights with the cops. When you see stuff like that and it's about you, you realize that, you know, they wanted to make us look like the angry Cubans. Right? To make everybody hate us.

As with many other young Miami Latinos, Ronald suddenly felt as if he was perceived as different, and that perception prompted political engagement. Ronald and other Latino youth, both Cuban and non-Cuban, frequented the daily demonstrations in front of the house where Elián stayed. All the youth we spoke with attended the demonstrations to express their solidarity. Ramon, another second-generation Cuban high school student, explained, "It was like a feeling that this was wrong and what can be done to show that this is not just going to be accepted by the [Cuban community]." Longitudinal ethnographic work indicated that the majority of these Miami Latino youth grew up politically apathetic and presumed that their group, Latinos, was locally hegemonic. The Elián case shocked them into an awareness of their "otherness" vis-à-vis the national political landscape. In this, Miami's young Latinos are similar to those studied by Bedolla (2000) who reacted strongly to the anti-immigrant propositions in California in the 1990s. In both cases, perceptions of discrimination produced heightened ethnic consciousness and engendered some form of civic engagement.

Civic Activities

South Florida college youth are assuredly engaged civically in their communities, particularly in activities

⁸This question did not distinguish between being registered to vote in the United States and, for immigrants, being registered to vote in one's home country. Given that immigrants could be registered to vote in their home country, we report the results here for both U.S. citizens and non-U.S. citizens.

⁹Because our survey was in an off-election year and many of the respondents would have been below voting age in the previous year, we did not ask about voting.

related to immigrants. Except the first-generation immigrants, nearly 90% had done voluntary or community service in high school, higher than the 82.6% reported for freshman nationwide in 2001 (Sax, Lindholm, Astin, Korn, & Mahoney, 2001). Even the first-generation immigrants, 80.3% of whom volunteered, compare favorably with the approximately 75% of high school seniors nationwide who did volunteer or community service in high school (Lopez, 2003).¹⁰ Every group, including first-generation immigrants, demonstrated especially strong participation in tutoring, and more than one half also participated in community fund-raising activities.

Again, this level of volunteerism may be influenced by local context. South Florida high schools have followed the current national trend of required community service activities as a prerequisite to graduation. Seventy-five percent of the college freshmen reported having had some form of a community service requirement in high school. Accordingly, most FIU freshmen spent some time during their high school years engaged in a service project to benefit their school or some part of the broader community. The range of experiences and especially the students' reactions and evaluations of them are remarkably diverse. Some students in the ethnographic sample spoke positively of their high school community service, many expressed mixed reactions, and some were overtly negative. According to Patrick, a second-generation Haitian immigrant student,

We weren't doing anything in class, so I had to do something that would take up my time. A lot of the [service] stuff was stuff that interested me anyway. I don't ever remember doing too much in high school. I don't remember having homework in high school. I don't remember any of that. I used to look forward to going to school because I knew I was going to have fun. The reason why I had fun was because I was in all these different [service] groups. I knew all these different people.

Similarly Julio, a first-generation Cuban immigrant student, commented,

Yeah, everybody liked it, 'cause, I mean, it was fun. You show up to the meetings and then you go out. On a Sunday you would go out to Key Biscayne and pick up trash or we would go to the dog pound to feed the animals, walk the animals. So it was cool. It was a nice thing to do; and, you would get community service out of it.

¹⁰Our measure and that reported by Lopez (2003) are not exactly the same. Lopez reports on those who participated in an activity in the last 12 months. Ours asked how often in high school and we report those who participated often or very often.

Jamal, a first-generation Trinidadian, added,

Participating is very important. I guess I wish I did more of it. I didn't realize how important it was. You are able in a way to get out of class a lot, see the world a lot, experience things, and you meet other people. If you're a shy type of person, this is perfect because you're able to stay within your element of being away from people while meeting people.

This positive attitude by at least some of the population is reflected in the high percentages of college youth who had been an officer of a club or student government during high school. Although first-generation immigrants had the lowest percentage of volunteer or community service, a relatively high percentage of them had been an officer (45.7%), more than the 42.8% for those not of immigrant origins. Through high school service and clubs, it certainly appears that significant proportions of the immigrant college population became civically engaged in their immediate communities.

By contrast, some students in the ethnographic sample expressed their resentment of the community service requirement. Ramon, a second-generation Cuban, proclaimed,

I needed some community service by the end of the year, 'cause I hadn't done anything... But I never did anything, 'cause it was like go to the beach and clean stuff! I'm not gonna go to the beach and clean stuff. That's stupid!

When we asked Luvy, a second-generation Haitian, to explain the acronym of one organization, DYFYIT, a school-based drug-prevention program, she responded, "I don't know! I don't know nothing about DYFYIT! We were just in there 'cause they would take us to field trips and stuff. That's all it was about."

Regardless of their motivations, as reflected in Table 2, the majority of the sample engaged in some form of service activity that likely occurred beyond fulfilling their most basic high school community service requirement.

Volunteer activities related to being a member of an immigrant community stand out. The immigrant-origin college students reported, for example, helping non-English speakers write, ranging from 74% for first-generation immigrants to 83.8% for the 1.5 generation. More than half of those not of immigrant origins (57.9%) also helped non-English speakers write. Similarly high percentages helped those who could not read or in some other way assisted immigrants. Opportunities for such service abound in Miami-Dade County, where more than one half of the population speaks a language other than English at home.

Yet, it was not solely necessity that impelled volunteer service. As Gladys, a second-generation Cuban student, explained, "For half of the year we went to Coral Park Elementary. We helped the LD [learning disabled] kids learn math and English and stuff they had problems with. That was cool. I liked that." Midchi, a first-generation Haitian, even joined a predominantly Latino club, *Aspira*, so that she would have more opportunity to provide service: "I always had this in my mind if I am in any club, I will be helping people. *Aspira* is helping people in a way and helping yourself in another way."

The civic activities of these youth match national samples that reflect high levels of involvement in volunteer activities. As Sánchez-Jankowski (2002) suggests, the specific kinds of volunteer activities for immigrants are different from those of nonimmigrants. The South Florida college youth devote considerable activity to helping other immigrants by taking advantage of their bilingual skills. These youth are not only bilingual but also bicultural. As with many immigrant youth, they form both a linguistic and a cultural bridge between their elders and the broader host society (Morales & Hanson, 2005; Portes & Rumbaut, 1996; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001).

Expressive Activities

All groups in the survey sample participated notably in the two expressive activities we assessed, athletics and ethnic clubs. First-generation immigrants had especially high participation in athletic activities (86.1%); the second generation's participation was the lowest, but still nearly three fourths participated. Ethnic club participation was lower than that for athletics, hovering around 50% for all immigrant generation groups. Athletics are a relatively easy and open activity for immigrants to join. English fluency may be less important, as participation is generally based on skill, and social discrimination that can exist in other realms may be minimized. Athletic activities also provide a sense of community. Clyford, a first-generation Haitian student in the ethnographic sample, noted, "Being on the soccer team was like being around a family." Similarly participation in ethnic clubs tends to be with co-ethnics, where language is also less likely to be an obstacle. As in the case of Midchi, the first-generation Haitian who joined the Latina club, *ASPIRA*, people occasionally cross ethnic lines by joining ethnic clubs. More commonly, however, these clubs maintain the division lines segregating different ethnic identities.

With the exception of first-generation immigrants, participation in expressive activities is generally lower than participation in volunteer or community service. Kirlin (2003) argues that expressive activities do not make a difference in subsequent civic engagement.

Given the high levels of voluntary activities, that may be a moot point for this sample. Nevertheless, other research does indicate that participation in athletics can forge solidarity across ethnic lines, even when outside the team ethnic divisions predominate (Greenfield, Davis, Suzuki, & Boutakidis, 2002; Stepick et al., 2003). Conversely, one would expect participation in ethnic clubs to increase ethnic solidarity and reduce chances for links across ethnic groups. Presently, we do not have data to assess whether these hypotheses are true. The most important finding is that participation in expressive activities, although high, was not as prevalent as that for civic voluntary ones.

Social Activities

Central to the notion of social capital are social relations, particularly social relations that can instrumentally lead to a material result, such as finding a job (Portes & Mooney, 2002). Putnam's conception of social capital emphasizes the group benefits of social relations rather than the individual benefits associated with the sociological use of social capital (Putnam, 2000). Yet, most work influenced by Putnam focuses on social relationships that are immediately linked to civic engagement, that is, those kinds of activities we have covered in the categories of service and political engagement. For youth, such as the college freshmen we surveyed, relationships that appear to be solely self- or family-centered may potentially lead to activities that have political or service results. Attending family reunions, for example, may be motivated by a sense of family responsibility, but it can produce an awareness of the needs of others and the ability of one to address those needs. Similarly, although Putnam may lament the decline of participation in various voluntary organizations from unions to PTAs, participation in a youth church group may have a similar ultimate effect upon one's sense of community. To obtain a more complete view of these youths' engagement, our questionnaire included social activities ignored by those who study solely political and service activities.

During their high school years, these college freshmen were socially engaged, most obviously with family and friends. A near unanimous majority engaged in both family activities and peer group activities of visiting relatives, hanging out with co-ethnic members, and visiting friends' homes. Majorities also attended family reunions, although first-generation immigrants (88.1%) were especially likely to do so, compared to 71.9% of those not of immigrant origins. Numerous scholars have indicated that watching over siblings can be especially prevalent for young immigrants (Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Although the proportion who did this

often or very often was highest among first-generation immigrants, it was still very high among the other groups, with the lowest being nearly 60% for those not of immigrant origins.

We included church attendance as a social activity because other research has indicated that religion can be very important on many levels to many immigrants (Stepick, 2005). Over 80% attended church while in high school. Ruby, a second-generation Mexican in the ethnographic sample, explicitly stated that church attendance has a social function: "For example, myself, when I stopped coming [to church] for a while for certain reasons, I felt that I was missing something... yes, it is because I come to church here and my friends are from church, they are mostly all Mexican from Mexico." Other research among immigrants indicates that church attendance often fulfills social capital functions, supplying information about jobs, housing, and other practical needs. Research has also demonstrated religion's role in promoting civic engagement among immigrants (Stepick). We do not have the space to explore the relationship between religion and civic engagement here. Nevertheless, it is clear that the majority in our sample is highly involved in religious activities providing social links to others in their community.

MAJOR ENGAGEMENT, MINOR DIFFERENCES

This research has produced two major findings: South Florida's college youth of immigrant origins are civically engaged in ways similar to those not of immigrant origins. Nevertheless, youth of immigrant origins do tend to civically engage in activities that relate to their particular community more than on a broader or national scale.

With one notable exception, the immigrant and non-immigrant youth we studied exhibited high levels of civic engagement in all four areas of engagement: political, civic, expressive, and social. They engaged at high levels in political discussions and information gathering. They volunteered, raised funds, tutored and helped immigrants, participated in sports and ethnic clubs, attended church, and were especially involved in family and peer activities.

By almost all of these measures, immigrant youth are statistically similar to their nonimmigrant peers. Yet, some specific activities are different and are related to being of immigrant origins and taking advantage of bilingual and bicultural skills (see also Jensen, this volume). Those of immigrant extraction were more likely to help recent immigrants, someone who cannot read, or a non-English speaker.

However, first-generation immigrants (but not the 1.5- or second-generation immigrants) were less likely to have performed community service in high school. Of course, they had been in the United States less time. Given the emphasis on community service in South Florida high schools, this research confirms that U.S. schools continue to function, at least in this one domain, as successful institutions of immigrant integration as they did in the last wave of immigration 100 years ago.

The impact of Elián on young Latino South Floridians reflects (Junn's 2006; Junn & Masuoka, this volume) observation and Maxwell's (2004) empirical study of the importance of context in assessing civic engagement. It is likely that if the Elián affair had not happened, these youth would not have participated in organized demonstrations and would have appeared as politically uninvolved as the rest of U.S. youth. Similarly, it demonstrates how survey data, which commonly do not contain information about context, can be misleading. Based on a national survey of Latinos, Martinez (2005) concludes that Cubans are less likely to engage in protest behavior than other Latinos. Although that was likely to have been the case when that survey was administered, Elián's return to Cuba altered that relationship for this sample of youth. After Elián, Miami's Latinos, including Cubans, exhibited civic engagement remarkably similar to the Southern California Latinos' response to the 1990s anti-immigrant measures there (Bedolla, 2000).

The relatively low engagement in electoral politics is consistent with the mobilization in response to the Elián affair. These South Florida youth were registered to vote at much lower levels than a comparable national sample. The first and 1.5 generations were especially unlikely to be registered to vote for the obvious reason that they were less likely to be citizens (although many theoretically still had the opportunity to register to vote in their home countries). Nevertheless, even the second-generation and nonimmigrant youth, both of whom are citizens by birth, are less likely than a national sample to be registered to vote. The qualitative research revealed both some well-developed cynicism about electoral politics and heavy involvement in nonelectoral politics, particularly the Elián affair that gripped Miami while we were conducting the research.

South Florida's high school-age and college-age immigrant-origin youth are volunteers, especially in activities related to the immigrant community. Levels of engagement do not differ significantly between youth of immigrant and nonimmigrant origins. Forms of engagement do differ, with immigrants being more involved in activities related to others of immigrant origins and becoming politically active primarily in response to discrimination.

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